of Mines,Governments of Orissa and Jharkhand and public sector iron ore mining companies. However, there has been an up-trend in the global steel prices over the last three months.

Steel production

1224. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that steel production in the country have increased manifold during the last six months;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Indian steel makers exported 2.35 million tonnes during April-September, 2003; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons for exerting pressure on steel makers and manufacturers not to increase steel prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) The production of Finished (Carbon) Steel during the period April, 2003 to September, 2003 has been provisionally estimated at 17.041 million tonnes which is 7.35% above the production during the corresponding period of the previous year.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) In a deregulated environment, prices are determined by the free interplay of forces of demand and supply. The Government does not intervene in the market to influence prices.

UN Volunteers programme

1225. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indians, at present participating in the United Nations Volunteers Programme, the areas of their assignments and the countries to which the volunteers have been assigned;

(b) the normal tenure of these volunteers in a particular country; and